

## **Resolution (2003) – 735**

### **A RESOLUTION TO REVISE THE PROCESS FOR APPROVAL OF MASTER PLANS FOR PARK AND RELATED PROJECTS**

**PURPOSE:** To develop a total program for a park which will best meet the needs of the community for which it is intended to serve. To insure that this purpose is met, there needs to be citizen input as well as professional planning and design. The entire process is designed to optimize public participation.

The purpose of a Master Plan for an individual piece of property is to determine the scope and character of its transformation for recreational purposes and for conserving significant environmental features. It has a relationship to the larger comprehensive recreation plan in that it fulfills some portion of the broader recreation objectives.

This resolution was developed to clarify and improve the Master Planning Process. It will serve as a helpful guideline for both the professionals and citizens involved in park planning. It is intended to replace Resolution (1988) – 195 and all other Master Planning guidelines, procedures and policies. Flow charts have been provided as visual aids. Descriptions of the park acquisition and development process have been added after the discussion of the Master Planning Process. A new element has been added to guide planning prior to the development of the Master Plan, and titled the “System Integration Plan (SIP).”

#### **The Park Master Planning Process**

Please refer to Figure 1, “Park Master Planning Process,” as a visual aid to the following explanation of the steps involved in the master planning process.

##### *I. Master Plan*

A Master Plan is a conceptual design document that generally describes and guides the future management and development of a park property. Its preparation is intended to be a public process to ensure that the needs of the public are met while preserving the ecological function and environmental quality of the site. Generally, all parks should have an adopted, relatively recent (less than 15 years old) Master Plan when intended for park development.

##### *II. Request to Initiate Master Plan*

Recommendation to consider a Master Plan study (new, revised or amended) may come from a variety of sources, including: City Council, citizen request or petition, City Administration, or the PRGAB (Parks, Recreation and Greenways Advisory Board). The City Council may choose to set thresholds which (See Decision 2, Section 3) automatically trigger a public master plan process but the City Council retains the right to require a master plan for any and all park properties, including greenways and nodes on the greenways.

##### *III. City Council Authorization*

City Council shall approve the initiation of a complete Master Plan, revision or an amendment to a plan, and refer the project to the PRGAB and administration for implementation. Administration shall provide a report to Council and the PRGAB addressing available funding, project schedule, special circumstances, system integration plan, and any other background information.

##### *IV. Select Chair/Vice Chair*

Council shall initiate the formal master plan process with the designation of a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for the Master Plan Committee, who shall also be members of the PRGAB. PRGAB shall

nominate for appointment to the Master Plan Committee, however, final appointment of the Master Plan Committee shall be made by the City Council.

Chairperson/Vice Chairperson responsibilities will be to:

- Call all meetings and select the dates, times, and locations
- Preside over the meetings and invite public comment at all appropriate stages throughout the process
- Formulate meeting procedures that encourage open-discussion, well-informed decision making, and working towards an agreement. The chair will call for a majority vote as needed to finalize decisions.
- Report to the PRGAB on the progress of the Committee, notify the PRGAB of meeting times, and present the final recommendations of the committee to the PRGAB and the City Council

#### *V. Staff Assignment*

A core group of Parks and Recreation staff will be identified by administration for participation on the Master Plan Team. (The Master Plan Team consists of staff, design consultants, and the citizen Master Plan Committee). The core group will consist of a minimum of three staff members including the Project Manager, Parks Division Representative, and Recreation Division Representative or appropriate substitute members as the Department may determine. The committee may request other appropriate staff, such as the City Naturalist, Urban Forester, or representatives from other City departments as needed for appropriate reports. Staff will be responsible for preparing agendas for meetings, recording meeting minutes, providing background information, and insuring adequate professional input throughout the process.

#### *VI. Project Notification*

##### *A. Notification*

- A notification sign (or more if the site fronts on multiple streets) will be posted at the site 30 days before the initial public meeting.
- Meeting and project information/background shall be made available at least two weeks prior to the first meeting to the City Council, PRGAB, owners of adjoining properties, registered neighborhood groups, including CACs, and registered park support groups \* within a 2 mile radius for any park master plan. Other interested groups as suggested by the Public Affairs or Community Services departments, such as the Historic Districts Commission, the Appearance Commission, the Planning Commission, the Human Resources and Human Relations Advisory Commission, and Mayor's Advisory Committee for Person's with Disabilities, shall also be notified. Meeting and project information will be posted at community centers and at other sites suggested by the Public Affairs Department. PRGAB, City Council, Master Plan Team (and Committee) Members (once identified), or administration all may recommend concerned individuals or groups who may have an interest in the park to receive notifications and mailings.
- Project and press releases shall be posted on Parks and Recreation website(s) at least one week prior to any meetings, with appropriate linkages to other websites as suggested by the Public Affairs Department.

\* A procedure for establishing registered park support groups should be developed by staff and submitted to Council for approval.

## B. Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held to inform area residents and interested parties of the beginning of the Master Planning Process and to receive initial input, including local knowledge of natural or historic features and community desires. At this meeting, potential Master Plan Committee members may be identified from among the participants. The public meeting will be in an accessible location as close to the park site as practical.

- Notification of the Initial Public Meeting shall be posted 30 days prior to the meeting date, and mailings sent at least 14 days prior to the meeting date. The meeting date will be posted on the Parks and Recreation Department website 30 days prior to the meeting.
- The Public Meeting notice will be publicized as required by City Council, the open meeting law<sup>1</sup> and will be more extensively publicized where deemed appropriate by the chair, Vice Chair, or staff, utilizing appropriate consultation from the Public Affairs Department.

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<sup>1</sup> North Carolina State statute Chapter 143, Article 33C specifies that each official meeting of a public body shall be open to the public, and any person is entitled to attend such a meeting. Every public body shall keep minutes of all official meetings. If a public body has established a schedule of regular meetings a current copy of that schedule is to be kept on file with the city clerk. Changes to the regular schedule shall be filed with the city clerk at least seven calendar days before the day of the first meeting held pursuant to the revised schedule. For any other meeting the public body shall cause written notice of the meeting stating its purpose to be posted on the principal bulletin board (Public Affairs Department) of the public body and to mail or deliver to each media service which has requested notice (Public Affairs Department handles these notices). The public body shall also cause notice to be mailed or delivered to any person who has filed a written request with the clerk. This notice shall be posted and mailed or delivered at least 48 hours before the time of the meeting. These statutes are subject to change. The City staff should annually review these requirements with the City Attorney's office.

## VII. Consultant Selection

The City's Standard Procedure 100-5 and related Management Policy 100-36 will be followed by the Parks and Recreation Department professional staff and the City Manager for drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selection of the project consultant except as directed by this policy. Final selection shall be subject to final approval by the City Council following normal procedures.

For a Master Plan Amendment, which is required when a new specific use is proposed in a park that does not significantly alter the uses established by the adopted Master Plan for the park, skip items VIII through XI and proceed to XII Public Review of Draft Master Plan or Draft Master Plan Amendments.

## VIII. Master Planning Committee Selection

- The PRGAB, after appropriate consultation with staff, shall recommend the membership and composition of the Master Plan Committee to the City Council for final appointment. The Master Plan Committee should be representative of persons with interests in the park and appropriate uses. The selection should take into account demographics of the area including age, race, gender, educational background and professional/personal experience, and other relevant qualifications related to the characteristics of the park involved.
- A minimum of twelve (12) members and a maximum of fifteen (15) members, including the Chair and Vice Chairperson, will be chosen.
- Potential members may be solicited at the Initial Public Notification Meeting, through flyer mailings, nominations from CACs and City appointed bodies, recommendations from City Council, or by posting on the City's Parks and Recreation webpage.

- Candidates should be informed of the expected time commitment and need to attend substantially all committee meetings. Candidates unable to make the commitment of time and study should not be selected.
- Nominees for the Master Plan Committee shall be forwarded to City Council by the PRGAB for final appointment.

#### *IX. Education*

The Master Plan Committee shall receive background information useful to the master planning process, including:

- A Review of the expectations for full participation, including attendance at meetings and individual study to understand the process and the project.
- A description of meeting procedures by the Chair.
- The current Council approved Master Planning Policies as well as the City Conflict of Interest policies.
- Comprehensive Park, Greenway and open Space Plan and other relevant portions of the City Comprehensive Plan.
- If there is a System Integration Plan, it will be provided.
- The staff will provide an executive summary (and make the complete copy available for review by committee members) of the site inventory with additional staff comment relevant to special features identified in the inventory, and make preliminary suggestions about objectives for the park to be considered by the Committee. Detailed information should be provided on any special environmental features identified through any available sources such as the Wake County Natural Areas Inventory, the NC Natural Heritage Program Database, or the Wake County Capital Trees Program.
- Staff will arrange an appropriate tour of other facilities with relevant programming and a site visit to the target park facility.
- Formal or informal citizen survey from the park planning area if available, and a summary of the public comments that have been received.
- Information on existing or anticipated funding.
- A description of the Parks and Recreation Department organization and operations as it applies to the project, and a description of the consultant and staff roles.

All Master Plan Committee Meetings will be open to the public. It will be the staff's responsibility to insure that the meeting dates are published in accordance with the State of North Carolina's Open Meetings Law.

#### *X. Master Plan Program Development*

The Master Plan Committee shall develop a program statement for the Master Plan that describes the overall vision for the park, including uses, sensitivity to natural elements, identity, history and other characteristics as appropriate. The Master Plan Program should be consistent with the System Integration Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Greenways Comprehensive Plan Elements. The Program Statement should include reference to the ecological significance and functions of the site and its relationship to the larger citywide and countywide facilities and their functions, particularly with respect to watershed protection and riparian buffers.

#### *XI. Draft Master Plan*

Based on the Program Statement, the design professionals will develop alternative site related diagrams representing a range of Master Plan Alternatives. The committee will select the concept that best accomplishes the Program Statement goals.

The draft Master Plan shall include the conceptual plan rendering, the Program Statement, other background information as appropriate, a written description of the intent of the Master Plan concept proposed, including the established elements of other previously adopted Master Plans, as well as recommendations for environmental stewardship of the park site and development of the park project.

The Master Plan Committee shall identify Priorities for phased development of the project, with consideration given to information on existing and anticipated funding. This information shall be approved by the Master Plan Committee and made available for public review and comment as provided in the following section.

#### *XII. Public Review of Draft Master Plan or Draft Master Plan Amendments*

The Draft Master Plan or Draft Master Plan Amendments will be made available for public review and comment. The complete “draft” and the System Integration Plan will be displayed on the Parks and Recreation Department website, at the nearest community center to the park location, the administrative offices for the Parks and Recreation Department at Jaycee Park, or other suitable locations suggested by the Public Affairs Department. There will be comment cards available at those locations. This display should be available at least fourteen (14) days prior to the public meeting.

The public meeting will be held by the Master Plan Committee to receive comment on the Draft Master Plan prior to recommendation to the PRGAB. Public notification of this meeting shall be consistent with notification requirements in section V, “Project Notification.” The PRGAB should be encouraged to attend this public meeting. Public comments shall be received for a period of at least two weeks after the public meeting. All comments received shall be summarized in a document and provided to the Master Plan Committee and Consultant, the PRGAB, and the City Council.

Concurrently, City administration interdepartmental review of the Draft Master Plan will take place. Comments provided through this review will be summarized in written form and provided to the Master Plan Committee, the Consultant, and the PRGAB, as well as the City Council.

#### *XIII. Recommended Master Plan*

The Master Plan Committee shall review comments received and address them in the final proposed Master Plan or Amendment to be forwarded to the PRGAB for consideration. The proposed Master Plan or Amendment shall include the final conceptual plan rendering, program statement, other background information as appropriate, written description of the intent of the Master Plan concept proposed, and recommendations for phased development of the park project, as well as the established elements of other previously adopted master plans.

#### *XIV. PRGAB Review of Proposed Master Plan*

The PRGAB shall consider the proposed Master Plan or Amendment with supporting documents and report to City Council. The public will be given the opportunity to comment on the plan to the PRGAB at a meeting advertised as prescribed in Section XI. Oral or written comments shall be accepted and transmitted with the proposed Master Plan to the City Council.

#### *XV. City Council Review for Adoption*

City Council shall receive the proposed Master plan report with recommendations and comments of the PRGAB for consideration. Final approval of any Master Plan or Master Plan Amendment lies

with the City Council after they have completed their review. The City Council may choose to return the plan to the PRGAB for additional revision of key elements.

The Master Plan Committee shall stay in existence until dissolved by the City Council, and the membership will be encouraged to attend the presentation to the City Council.

## General Description of the Park Development Process

For a visual representation of the park development process, please refer to the Park Development Process Flow Chart. The “Decisions” outlined below refer to the points at which a decision must be made in the process before continuing on to the next step.

### *I. Comprehensive Plan*

The Park, Recreation and Open space element of the City of Raleigh Comprehensive Plan is the document that guides development of the city’s park system. The City Comprehensive plan projects local and regional growth patterns and public infrastructure needs including parks, greenways and open space for conservation of natural resources and preservation of our environmental quality. The overall Comprehensive plan and its influence on these specific elements must be considered in the context of park planning in order to ensure that public needs are met in the decision-making processes. Future park needs are compared with an existing inventory of park facilities over a twenty to thirty year horizon. Capital improvement funding, acquisition of park properties, classification of new park lands acquired, and master planning of specific parks should each be guided by the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

### *II. Capital Improvement Program*

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a multi-year budget for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The CIP includes capital allocations for park development projects, including land acquisition, facility development and renovation, including both park bond projects and general fund projects. The City administration reviews and updates its recommendations for the CIP annually and forwards them to the PRGAB for review and comment. Then the Administration forwards its final CIP recommendations to City Council for review and adoption.

Decision 1:

Is the land owned by the City?

(If the City already owns the park land, then skip III and IV and proceed to Decision 2 below).

### *III. Land Acquisition*

The City Administration conducts all land acquisition for the park system with direct supervision by the City Council. Land acquisition includes identification of potential park sites, negotiation of purchase agreements with landowners, and acquisitions. All acquisitions should be consistent with the goals and objectives established by the Comprehensive plan, and must include appropriate environmental investigations and a minimal site assessment prior to recommendation to the City Council.

### *IV. System Integration Plan*

The objective of the System Integration Plan (SIP) is to develop a set of guidelines for the interim management of parkland prior to the initiation of a Master Plan, to document existing site conditions and constraints, to establish the park’s classification consistent with the Comprehensive plan, and if

applicable, any proposed special intent for the park. The SIP is not intended to restrict the Master Plan Process.

Public notification of the SIP process shall be given to the City Council, the PRGAB, the CACs, registered neighborhood groups, registered park support groups, and appropriate City appointed bodies.

Greenway parcels and open space parcels will generally not require a site-specific System Integration Plan as the purpose and management of greenways is generally defined by the Greenway Element of the Comprehensive plan and the restrictions included in the acquisition instruments. Special segments with unique ecological features or larger nodes in the greenway system may require an SIP and/or a Master Plan. The Master Plan in these cases may equate to a General Management Plan as used by the NC Division of Parks and Recreation or adopted City Parkland Greenway Management policies.

#### *A. SIP Elements:*

##### **1. City Council Directed Purpose**

Review and confirm any proposed purpose stated by the City Council for the development and use of the property. Utilize the baseline inventory to identify any potential conflicts with existing City policies or ordinances as well as applicable state and federal laws. Potential conflicts and proposed resolutions of these conflicts should be reported to the City Council for final approval.

##### **2. Property Deed Restrictions**

Review the deed or purchase agreement for any restrictions, limitations, or commitments to the intended development of the property.

##### **3. Comprehensive Plan Correlation**

The current Comprehensive Plan should provide initial direction regarding the classification of, purpose and development intent for the park acquisition. Correlation to the Comprehensive Plan recommendations should be confirmed in the City Council action to acquire the property.

##### **4. Site Inventory**

An initial evaluation of the property will be conducted to determine the range of features and qualities of the property to provide direction and guidance for the management and future development of the property. This evaluation and management plan will be enhanced by:

- Documentation of existing site conditions and constraints, the extent and character of natural and cultural resources, and any existing facilities.
- Tree, flora, and fauna inventories
- A general review of the site to determine potential stream and watercourse buffers, property buffers, and special features to be addressed in the SIP.
- A review of development regulations for additional requirements that should be addressed in the SIP.
- An inventory of historical data at the local and state levels to determine potentially significant features to be addressed in the SIP.
- An inventory of archeological data at the local and state levels to determine potentially significant features to be addressed in the SIP.

The tree, flora, fauna, ecological, historical and archeological inventories should be performed by staff or consultants specifically qualified to perform such inventories. These findings shall be presented to the PRGAB for review in their entirety along with attached staff comment.

At this stage, the PRGAB should consider referral to an appropriate PRGAB committee to serve as an SIP Advisory Committee to review the findings and assist staff with interim management policies.

Any unique findings will be used initially in management decisions for the property and then later shared with the citizen Master Plan Committee and consultant. Interim management decisions for the site should be resolved to best maintain the environmental quality and ecological function of the site.

#### *B. Develop and Submit for Approval*

Parks and Recreation Department staff shall develop the SIP, working with the SIP Advisory Committee where the PRGAB has chosen to assign to the appropriate PRGAB committee. The draft SIP shall be posted on the City's website and other appropriate publication as suggested by the Public Affairs Department. The public shall be given reasonable opportunity to comment through email or other written communication as well as the formal presentation to the PRGAB. A sign (or more if the property fronts on multiple streets) shall be posted at the site fourteen (14) days prior to presentation to PRGAB. Adjoining property owners and CACs previously identified City appointed bodies, registered neighborhood groups, and registered park support groups will be notified of the plan fourteen (14) days before presentation to the PRGAB. The public shall be given an opportunity to comment in person at a regularly scheduled PRGAB meeting. The PRGAB shall submit the recommended SIP to the City Council for adoption after appropriate review. The SIP shall be established and adopted by City Council as soon as is practical after site acquisition.

#### Decision 2:

Is a master plan needed?

1. A new Master Plan is needed in the following situations:
  - Every park site should have a minimal baseline inventory showing property boundaries and riparian buffers and a Master Plan or General Management Plan
  - For acquired but undeveloped park property, a Master Plan derived through a public process is required before any development for public utilization
2. A Revised Master Plan is needed in the following situations:
  - When a Master Plan has been in place more than 15 years, the park has not been fully developed and additional facilities or renovations are planned. This may be minimal review by the PRGAB and staff if the plans are consistent with an existing Master Plan, but must be publicly advertised for comment
  - Proposed park improvements are not consistent with the existing adopted Master Plan
  - The Revised Master Plan Process will be the same as for a new Master Plan
3. The following thresholds will be considered when evaluating whether to initiate a new Master Plan, revised Master Plan or Master Plan Amendment:
  - An improvement with a monetary value greater than \$350,000 or \$500,000 over five years



4. A Master Plan Amendment is needed when a new specific use not included in the adopted Master Plan is to be considered for the park or a specific change for the park is proposed that does not significantly alter other uses of the park.
5. A Master Plan is not needed when:
  - There is facility development or maintenance that is consistent with an existing Master Plan
  - Greenway development. However, special segments with unique ecological features or larger nodes in the greenway system may require an SIP and/or a Master Plan. The Master Plan in these cases may equate to a General Management Plan as used by the NC Division of Parks and Recreation or adopted Park and Greenway Management Policies. A Master Plan Amendment to the Greenway Element may also be appropriate.

#### *V. Design*

Design is the first step in implementing a Master Plan. The design phase provides the detailed, technical development plans for components and/or phases of a park. The design process is directed by the City staff utilizing appropriate consultants and public comment based on the adopted Master Plan and reflecting the development regulations and codes that regulate the design and implementation of construction projects. Schematic design of components or phases of a park will be reviewed with the PRGAB and the public to provide the Parks and Recreation Department staff with feedback on the compatibility of the project with the adopted park Master Plan. The Master Plan Committee (those who are still local and/or reachable by normal means) shall be notified of the Design Phase and invited to comment to the PRGAB during the public review. Additional direct community feedback on the project design plans will be solicited by the following methods: (1) For at least 14 days there will be a display/posting of plans on City's website and (2) at a nearby community center for at least 14 days in advance of the advertising of the bid process for public review and comment. Comments shall be forwarded to the PRGAB and the City Council prior to awarding of contracts.

#### *VI. Construction*

Construction is the final step in implementing the Master Plan. City Administration directs the construction process. Public bid and contract laws and procedures regulate the process of construction bidding, contract award, execution and implementation of construction projects.

#### *VII. Post Occupancy Evaluation/Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation*

After each major phase of development and construction, the park facilities and customer satisfaction with the facilities will be evaluated by the staff through user surveys. The objective of these evaluations is to identify improvements that the City can make to improve functioning of the park. The staff will prepare a report to the PRGAB and the planning consultant including information from public survey or comment. The PRGAB shall report to the City Council as they deem appropriate.

Adopted and Effective: April 25, 2003

Revised January 6, 2004